

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Claims 1-21 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 8, and 15 have been amended. Support for the amended claims is found in the specification. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-3, 5, 7-10, 12, 14-17, 19 and 21

Claims 1-3, 5, 7-10, 12, 14-17, 19 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. patent 5,726,899 (Neches). Reconsideration and allowance of the claims are respectfully requested for the following reasons.

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 is novel and patentable over Neches because, for instance, Neches does not teach or suggest "serially receiving, from a source, a plurality of forward messages each addressed to one of a plurality of destinations, wherein each forward message is received at a destination directly from the source."

Neches does not show or suggest these features of the invention. In Neches, requests from the host computer are communicated to an interface processor, which determines to which processor to route the request. See Neches, column 5, lines 22-37. Furthermore, Neches discusses broadcasting messages, where "messages are simultaneously delivered to all processors without, specific delineation of one or more recipients." See Neches, column 15, lines 25-27.

In contrast, in the present invention, the source directly transmits each forward message to an addressed destination (see also figure 1 of the patent application), where each forward message is addressed to one of a plurality of destinations (see page 4, lines 6-7). There is no interface processor that routes the request as in the prior art. For at least the above reasons, claim 1 and its dependent claims 2, 3, 5, and 7 are novel and patentable over Neches. Claims 8-10, 12, and 14 relate to an apparatus that is similar to that in the method of independent claim 1 and should therefore also be patentable over Neches. Claims 15-17, 19, and 21 relate to a computer program product that is similar to that in the method of independent claim 1 and should therefore also be patentable over Neches.

Claims 4, 6, 11, 13, 18, and 20

Claims 4, 6, 11, 13, 18, and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Neches.

Applicants respectfully assert that independent claim 1 is patentable over Neches because, for instance, Neches does not disclose or suggest "serially receiving, from a source, a plurality of forward messages each addressed to one of a plurality of destinations, wherein each forward message is received at a destination directly from the source."

As discussed above, Neches specifically directs that requests from the host computer are communicated to an interface processor, which determines to which processor to route the request. See Neches, column 5, lines 22-37. In addition, Neches discloses that "messages are simultaneously delivered to all processors without, specific delineation of one or more recipients." See Neches, column 15, lines 25-27. In contrast, the present invention discusses sending a forward message to a destination directly from the source (see page 4, lines 6-7). Therefore, Neches clearly teaches away from the claimed feature of directly sending a forward message from the source to one addressed destination.

For at least the above reason, claim 1 and dependent claims 4 and 6 are patentable over Neches. Claims 11 and 13 relate to an apparatus that is similar to that in the method of independent claim 1 and should therefore also be patentable over Neches. Claims 18 and 20 relate to a computer program product that is similar to that in the method of independent claim 1 and should therefore also be patentable over Neches.

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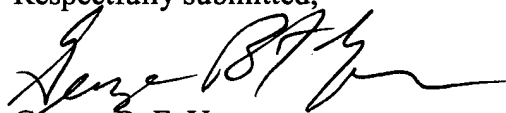
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**CONCLUSION**

In view of the foregoing, applicants believe all claims now pending in this application are in condition for allowance and an action to that end is respectfully requested.

If the examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400, extension 5213.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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